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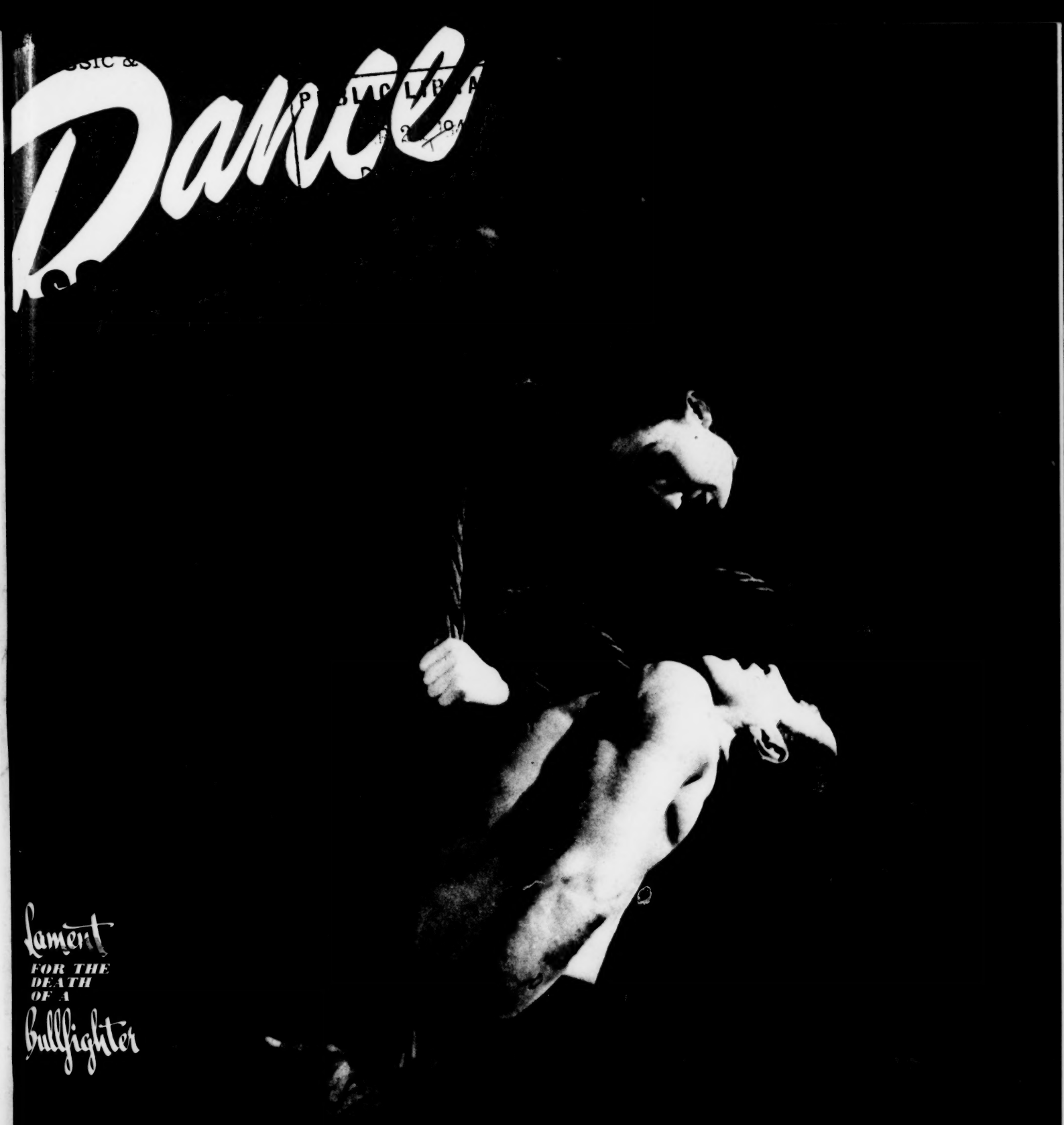

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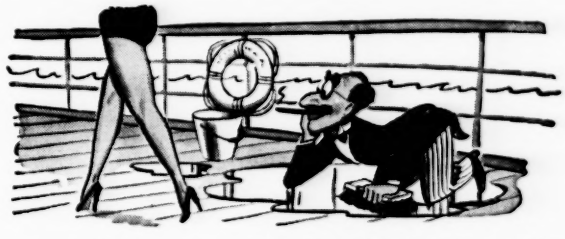

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READERS WRITE

Sirs:

I wish to congratulate the editors of DANCE on the fine work they have done on the magazine over the past year. I have done some dancing myself and have known many other dancers and am only too well aware of the narrow outlook of some of these so-called artists. If they have studied ballet, they usually feel that the classic steps and postures are the only forms which can righty be termed "dance". Diaghileff and Nijinsky are the gods of their holy race. Likewise the moderns have their own circle and their own idols. I have met very few members of the various cults who are willing to admit that what is expressed through movement is more important than how it is done. Most would rather dance for a Hitler and embody his principles, as long as their precious technique were allowed. than perform for a critical and free public who might question their intent.

Therefore, I have been greatly pleased that a magazine about dancing has attempted a popular approach and remained aloof from the idol worshippers. It is not easy to escape the pressures of so small a field, but in its recent issues DANCE has done an admirable job.

I. WATERS
New York, N. Y.

Sirs:

Although not being a "so-called dance critic", I felt Ezra Goodman's remarks concerning Katherine Dunham in the January issue of DANCE quite out of place.

Being familiar with Katherine Dunham's work for a long time, and knowing more of it than the numbers offered in *Bal Negre*, I am sure of her gifts as a choreographer as well as her artistic integrity. She has, in the first place, never claimed to reproduce folk dances and rites of the West Indies in a way the camera would reproduce them. Her aim was, and is, the transformation of the elements of primitive or popular negro dances into choreographed works as part of the theatrical arts. This is her privilege as an artist.

H. R. WAGNER
New York, N. Y.

Dance

VOLUME XXI March, 1947 NUMBER 3

Rudolf Orthwine, Editor and Publisher

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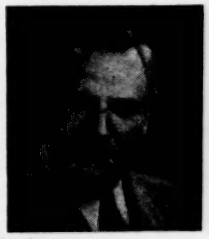
COVER: Jose Limon and Letitia Ide eloquently render "Lament for the Death of a Bullfighter", choreographed by Doris Humphrey and based on the famous poem of Lorca. Photograph by Carmen Schiavone.

TEN YEARS OF DANCE

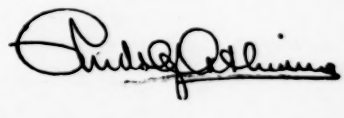


WHEN I started the Mordkin Ballet in 1937 with Mikhail Mordkin and Lucia Chase, we had a great deal of enthusiasm and hope for the dance in the theatre. At that time ballet was tightly controlled. If one could not play at the Metropolitan and have the show booked through one source, it spelled financial death, and financial death it was for the Mordkin Company. However, we had enough confidence in good dancing and good theatre so that we expanded and built what possibly will always be known as the greatest theatre dance group ever assembled in this country — the Ballet Theatre of 1940.

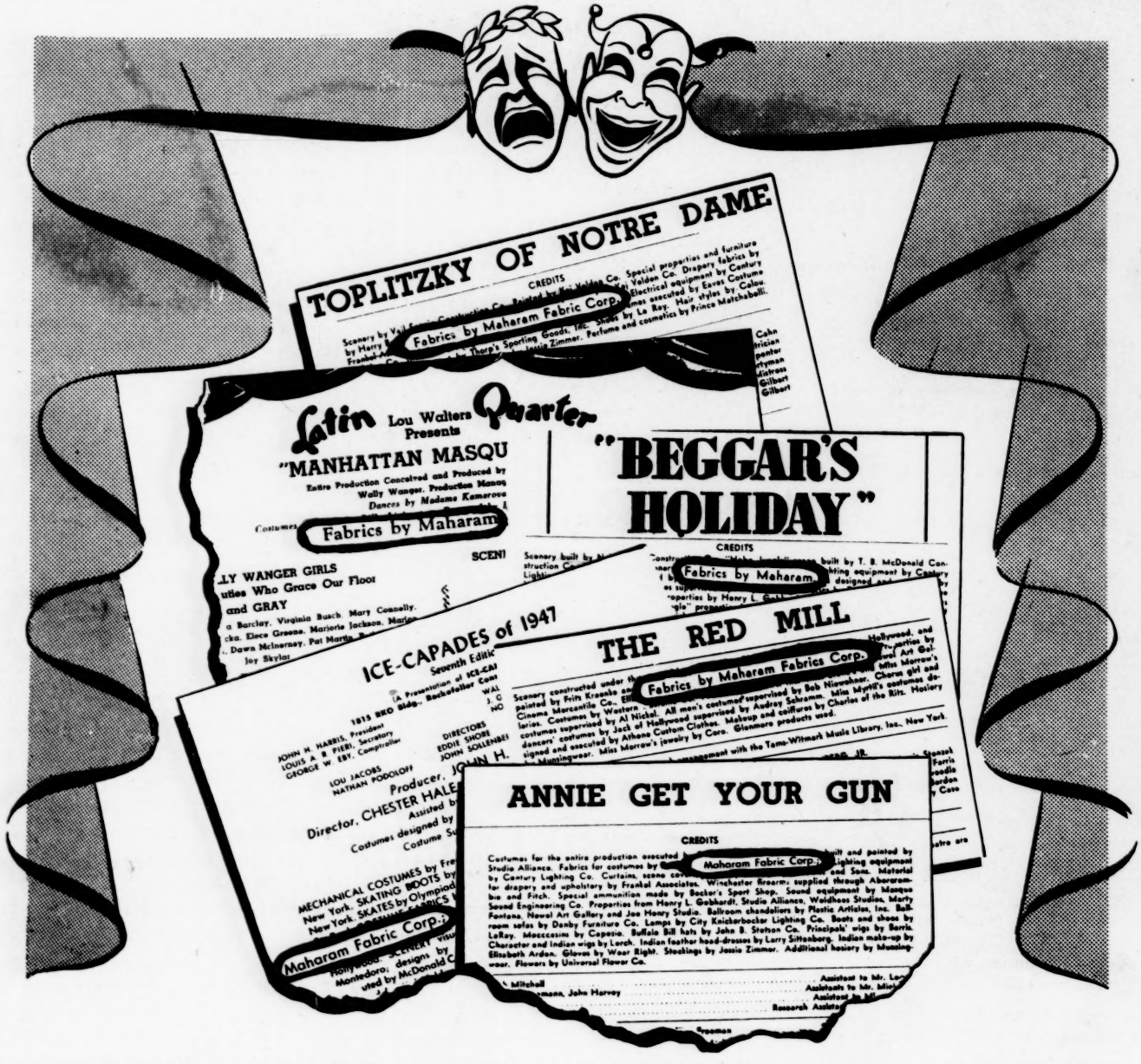
We opened the curtain at the Radio City Center Theatre with twenty-one new ballets by such outstanding choreographers as Fokine, Mordkin, Bolm, Nijinska and those of the younger school, Tudor, de Mille, Dolin, Howard, Fernandez and Shabelevsky. Designers included Soudekine, Aaronson, de Molas, Simonson, Benois, Ballard, Baronov, Hambleton, Sovey, Stevenson and Tack, and music by eighteen composers, old and new. The performances were a tremendous success. There was an electrified audience. I will never forget a long night of conversations with Lincoln Kirstein when he told us that we had accomplished what he had tried to do and that he now intented to merge his Caravan with Ballet Theatre.

I am quite sure that the success of that 1940 season of Ballet Theatre was responsible for the influx of ballet and modern dance into Broadway musicals. I think Ballet Theatre also was the first group who dared to play in a popular theatre and reaped success. However, since that time, the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo has packed the house at City Center at popular prices. At this date, Ballet Russe books its own attractions as does Ballet Theatre, which would have been almost impossible in 1937. The popularity of dance theatre has grown tremendously during the past ten years. American Dance Studios have contributed their share by turning out a good number of fine dancers. It seems right now New York is the dance hub of the world.

The dance has come a long way in America in the last ten years. But in this field particularly one cannot trade on past laurels. The problem is to keep this public interest. It can only be done by presenting a good dance show by good artists and an ever alert zeal for improvement by management and artists, and last but not least, by sufficent financial backing to create high artistic works. Good luck to all of you sincere persons who work in this show profession. Good theatre will always be in demand for it is one of the few avenues for thorough relaxation in these hectic times.



A Familiar Name in Theatre Programs



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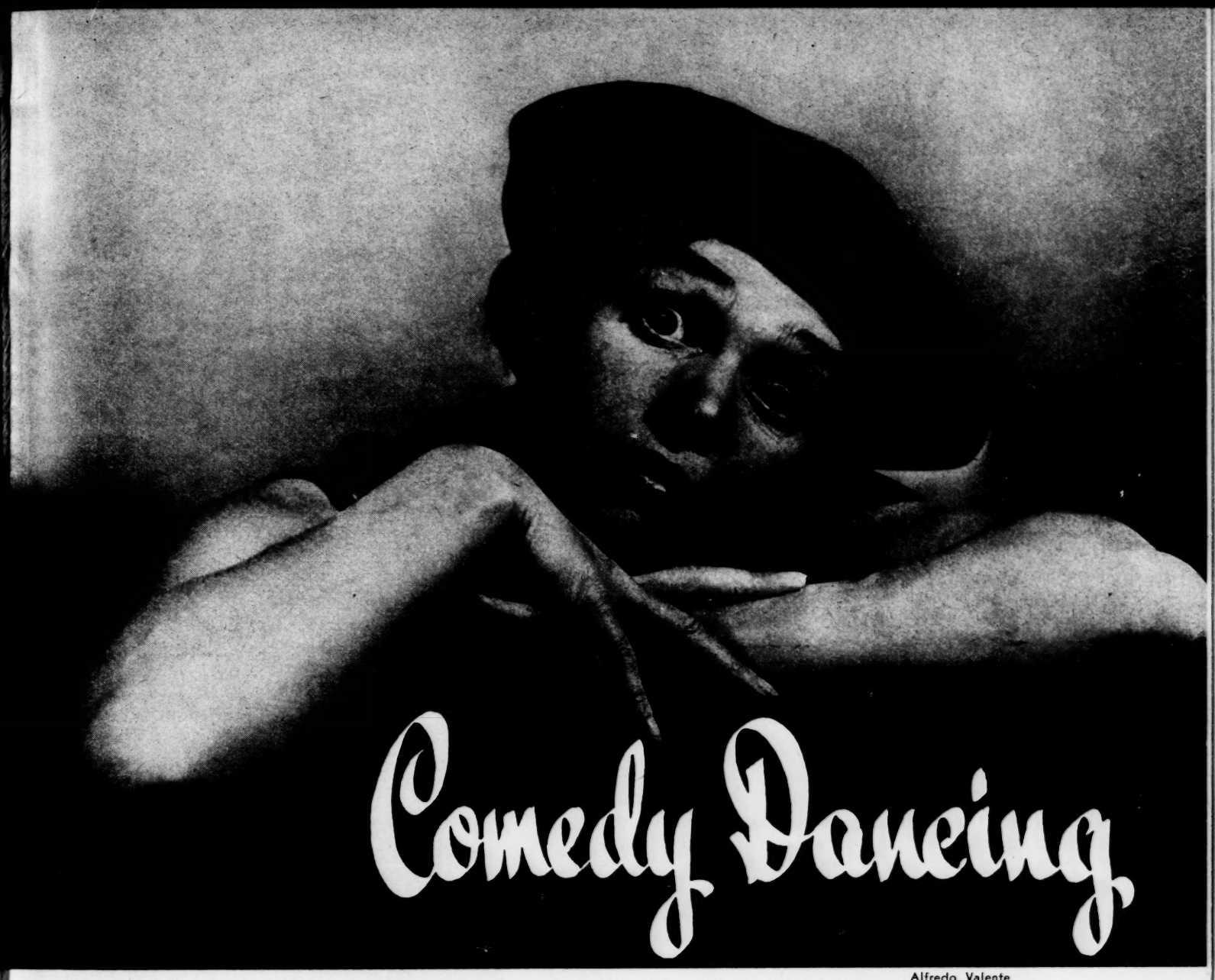


Comedy Dancing

Alfredo Valente

Trudi Schoop, returning to this country after an eight year absence, approaches dances with an inimitable sense for comic pantomime.

survey of humor in the dance shows dearth of comic artists

by ***BERNARD SOBEL***

SOUND the alarum! The race of comedy dancers is dwindling away. This dreary fact is confirmed by current theatre programs which list only a few names that can be rated superlative. Of these, the most prominent include Ray Bolger, James Barton, who has already deserted Terpsichore for the drama, and the Hartmans who deflect similarly and occasionally.

As a matter of fact, comedy dancers have never been very numerous, and the contemporary touch-and-go era has already forgotten some of those who were most popular, in spite of their contributions to the history of comic entertainment. In this nebulous group belongs Eva Tanguay who startled audiences with her burlesque Salome dance, Harlan Dixon who amused with his automaton routine, Tom Dingle,

Ben Blue, Sammy White, Hal Sherman, Ann Pennington, Tom Patricola, Adele Astaire, Clifton Webb and the versatile innovator, Gertrude Hoffman.

Analyzing humor, generally speaking, is an intransigent task. Laughter has varied with time and place. However, it is upon the assumption that anything which falls below the ideal is laughable, whether it is behavior, dress, politics or mankind, that comic dancing is based. Most dancers may be unaware of the fact, their approach being purely instinctive.

Such is the case, certainly, with highly individualistic James Barton. Though this fine artist has not appeared as a dancer for a number of years, his interest in the subject is as lively as the memories his art inspired. Almost everything that he says he illustrates with superlative stepping, mimicry and burlesque. If he starts, for instance, to talk about what was once called aesthetic dancing, he dubs the routine "sneak steps". Then he glides over the dressing-room floor, throws himself against the door and poses there archly, poised high on his toes, his hands supplicating, looking like a naiad trying to escape.

"When I look over the footlights," Barton explained, swerving from postures and dance steps to psychology, "I try to spot someone who seems indifferent, and from that moment on, I dance for him until I've won his interest. By this time, the whole audience is with me. If the audience is boisterous and inattentive, I play down to it instead of up, that is, I make my stepping so soft that everyone has to quiet down in order to hear the dance rhythm."

The approach of Grace and Paul Hartman to comedy dancing is noteworthy. They believe that the audience requires them to complete any endeavor they originate, and they build their humor on this assumption. If, for instance, Mrs. Hartman tries to lift her husband from the floor, she strives to exert enough physical effort and strain to make the audience think that she is actually raising him from the floor.

"We have to be very serious," says Mr. Hartman, "more serious than anyone else. We work also for the sympathy of the audience, because we believe that sympathetic comedians are the most successful. Charlie Chaplin was the greatest. Similarly, Victor Moore is most amusing when he is trying solemnly to do his best. The audience feels sorry for him even while laughing at him."

America's record for successful comedy dancing goes undoubtedly to another dancing team, the veterans, Buck and Bubbles. Their accomplishments have been definitely astonishing. For twenty-seven years, they have performed, without any variation whatsoever, a dance which has proved a perfect model for dexterity and rhythm, and an inevitable show-stopper. During the long period of their association, they have lived through and outlived vaudeville, presenting this infallible specialty from one circuit to another while millions of fathers and mothers laughed only to have their children and their grandchildren grow up to repeat the laughter.

Discussing their extraordinary success, Buck remarked, "I believe that we get our first laugh with the help of our costumes. The shoes are too big. The trousers are too short on one of us, and too long on the other. Our first movements also create laughter, for I pretend that I'm an amateur. I watch Bubbles do a step, then I repeat it, but listlessly as

Below: Joan McCracken, shown dancing with Jim Mitchell in "Billion Dollar Baby", has a natural flair for comic stepping.

Graphic House

Opposite page, above: Ray Bolger has kept audiences laughing with his humorous numbers such as in "Three To Make Ready".

Opposite page, below: Paul and Grace Hartman are outstanding examples of dance comedians who play on audience's sympathy.

Vandamm

if I were tired. The biggest applause comes when I stub my toe. Yes, a simple physical trick like that, though completely out of harmony with perfect dexterity, has pleased audiences for generations."

Contrastingly cerebral is the procedure of Ray Bolger. "A good unified story," he says, is the first essential for a comedy dance. Without it, no number can get real laughter. As a matter of fact, when I create a comedy dance, I proceed as if I were a short story writer with a unified idea that will hold attention from the beginning through the climax. First, I establish a character. Then I translate this character into dance steps and pantomime. I strive to portray the man as he is, with all his foibles, fancies and eccentricities. When these are so clear that the audience recognizes them, I make him tell his own story.

"Being a comic dancer," Mr. Bolger continued, "is a serious matter. Like the stage comedian, he must play straight, never be too formal or overstylized. I can't be a clown or a buffoon. And even my facial expression must be honest, not a grimace. I must show what the character is thinking."

Mr. Bolger believes firmly in formal dance training. "The more you study technique," he declared, "the more you add to your dancing. In order to satirize a ballet or any other step, you should be able first to do any step properly. Many comic dancers don't progress because they don't study deeply."

Among the new comic dancers who are coming into prominence is Iva Kitchell. Low comedy is her forte, her burlesques of chorus girls and ballerinas being uproarious. She gains some of her effects by courageously emphasizing her physical imperfections. Because her figure is plump and her legs stout, she intensifies her weight so that she looks squat and heavy. Her first entrance, as a result, causes an immediate laugh; and when she attempts graceful leaps and lissome steps, her own body seems to pull her down. Cleverly, too, Iva uses a single prop — a couple of incongruous flowers on a stem which is planted in the middle of the stage. Around this she poses, sniffs imaginary perfume, and simpers fantastically, a runaway from a Botticelli painting.

In discussing her numbers, Miss Kitchell states that she works on a dance until she knows what she will do on every sixteenth note of the music. Then, after perfecting the technique, she strives to forget the whole structure in order to create the effect of extemporaneous creation.

As a matter of fact, though balletomanes may blind their eyes to the truth, ballet is a highly artificial concept. It belongs to an idealistic world where human figures are statuesque and grace predominates, where earthly emotions and desires give way to sidereal perfection. Nevertheless, ballet dancing is only one step away from absurdity.

Mata and Hari encompass this step expertly. They know every pose and cliche of the divertissement arena. Skillful technicians, they perform intricate technical feats while spoofing. Their burlesque of *Swan Lake* is one of the funniest dances of this generation. Their facial expression and pantomime also add much to their humor, a humor that has scope and variety. Furthermore they are, perhaps, the most fluent of all risibility dancers in their descriptions of procedure, training and objective.

"We don't set out to be funny," said Mata. "We plan our numbers first as entertainment, anticipating that some mo-

Dwight Godwin — Windmann

Left: Mata and Hari burlesque oriental mannerisms in their "Hindu Fakirs" dance. Center: Danny Kaye's prancing on the screen points the way to a new development in comedy dancing. Right: Iva Kitchell, who does takeoffs on all forms of dance, exaggerates ballet technique in her "Sonatina Rococo".

ments have comic possibilities. We strive also to emphasize the humor of weakness in relation to our experience in the arts, in ballet and in night clubs.

"We rely on our memories: the behavior of people at night clubs, how they ignore the entertainers, yet applaud violently; the forced bows at Carnegie Hall functions; acrobat's ceremonial in wiping his hands; and the superior manners of Hindu fakirs.

"Sometimes we work a year on a number, shaping and editing as the pattern developes. We build our dances for the enjoyment of the audience. And it is the audience which often develops the laughs by creating a reciprocal relation, sensing the humor before we do."

Mata and Hari were originally members of the Trudi Schoop group. Miss Schoop, who is returning to this country after an absence of eight years, is sometimes billed as the Charlie Chaplin of the dance. She achieves her comic effects largely through pantomime. Hers is a miniature technique, developed on the small stage of European night club and cabaret.

Noteworthy also are Harrison and Fisher whose burlesque divertissements in the *Would-Be Gentleman* were uproarious. They began in classic style, superbly dressed with wigs and brocades. Dexterous and graceful, they curtsied and glided. Then suddenly, they burst out into a long series of wild manoeuvers, acrobatic feats and preposterous poses, a laughter debauch.

Representative of the same type of humor was the forgotten dancer named Edna Covey. She appeared doing the *Swan Song*, started her number in the formal Pavlova manner and then stubbing her toes in the midst of a pianissimo passage. The laughter that followed filled the auditorium and continued to do so, season after season, in formal theatre and stage show, until Miss Covey retired suddenly, never, alas, so far as we know, to appear again.

Certain dancers who have gained attention for their comedy numbers in Broadway productions are developing into specialists, perhaps even stars. First in this group is Joan McCracken who scored droll hits in *Oklahoma!* and *Bloomer Girl*, was given greater opportunities in *Billion Dollar Baby*, and repeated her success, revealing new abilities. Her demeanor is usually calm and detached and she dances as if the right leg doesn't know what the left is doing. Her sense of comedy is certain.

Avon Long, who did brilliant work in *Porgy and Bess* and is now in *Beggar's Holiday*, has an expansive type of expression, combining the technical skill of Bill Robinson with richer humor, pantomime and abrupt changes of routine that are as surprising as they are funny. Another young dancer, Betty Garrett, presented one of the funniest dances of recent years in her satirical consideration of the below-the-border dance craze in *Call Me Mister*. Noteworthy among fugitive bits of comedy dancing is Agnes de Mille's bawdy deportment in *Judgment of Paris* and Ethel Merman's Indian dance in *Annie Get Your Gun.*

Though Sheila Bond and Danny Daniels don't come under the listing of comic dancers, they present a serio-comic number in *Street Scene* which is sensational. Their volcanic energy, grotesque stepping, extravagant postures and overlapping suggestion of laughter and tears, furnish a startling new experience in the theatre.

Some of the finest comedy dancing flourishes in the ice shows. Here skill, which makes the heart stop beating, produces also the old-fashioned belly laugh. Here comedians on skates dance with a grace that fits a drawing room. Their acrobatic feats are amazing, their humor copious. Chief among the peers of ice skating artists are Freddy Trenkler and Frick and Frack. They never fail to amuse.

A new medium for the development of comic dancers is the screen, with only a limited number of performers registering importantly thus far. Prominent among these few is Vera Ellen, whose abilities the theatre habitues were quick to recognize and who recently won more followers in the motion picture *Three Little Girls in Blue.*

Speaking of futurities, Danny Kaye may be the artist who will develop the seemingly endless, but as yet unrealized possibilities of the cinema. It would be pleasant, indeed, if he could transfer to the screen the winning pattern that he employs in night clubs, because, for him, the dance floor is a limitless arena over which he prances deliriously, a mocking, abandoned jester. The wide areas of the screen should inspire him to pioneer accomplishment.

Surely the screen must eventually increase the race of risibility dancers!

Broadway Choreographers

by EZRA GOODMAN

THREE leading dancers and choreographers, Michael Kidd, Anna Sokolow and Valerie Bettis, are currently represented on the Broadway musical stage with *Finian's Rainbow*, *Street Scene* and *Beggar's Holiday* respectively. Their opinions on the subject of the welding of musical comedy and ballet and modern technique are interesting as the expressions of craftsmen both in the concert and Broadway field.

Michael Kidd, whose dances for *Finian's Rainbow* have been acclaimed as one of the most distinctive features of that show, is an exponent of the integration of dancing and drama in the theatre. He believes that a musical should never be stopped dead in its tracks for a dance production number, but that the dance should flow out of the dramatic continuity and further it.

"*Finian's Rainbow*," says Kidd, "had no apparent places for dancing. In order for the dances not to obtrude, I tried to remove the distinction between the singers and dancers by mixing the two groups. It was a difficult task to get the singers to move and to achieve naturalness and

dance directors of leading musicals discuss footlight theory and technique

Portraits: Isolde Chapin

Left: Michael Kidd discusses his latest choreographic venture, the dances for the new Broadway musical hit, "Finian's Rainbow". Below: Dance sequence from the show.

Graphic House

spontaneity. In this fashion, we were able to lead from a song into a dance without the audience becoming conscious of any dance preparations. A gradual stylization in the movements of the singers blended into a full-fledged dance number with ease. I also handled all exits and entrances of groups of people in the dramatic continuity, and this made for a choreographic feeling throughout the show."

Finian's Rainbow is Kidd's first Broadway musical. He is chiefly known as a ballet dancer and for his *On Stage* for the Ballet Theatre. *On Stage*, as many critics pointed out, has musical comedy and vaudeville elements in it. The dancing in *Finian's Rainbow*, however, avoids recognizable ballet movements. It is a blend of folk and modern elements, with occasional use of an arabesque turn or pirouette to emphasize or differentiate character or incident. Kidd is of the opinion that dance must express human beings in relation to one another, not just design and movement. "They must be people dancing, not just dancers dancing," he says. "Movement, as such, is never adequate. The type of dancing in *Finian's Rainbow* had to befit the occupation and economic and social condition of the sharecroppers and other characters in the show. That is why stylized ballet movements were ruled out. But I did utilize the facility and quickness of ballet in the dancing."

Anna Sokolow's dances for the musical version of Elmer Rice's *Street Scene*, although on the casual and incidental side, impress the spectator with their warmth and honesty. Miss Sokolow herself impresses the interviewer with those characteristics. *Street Scene* is Miss Sokolow's first venture outside of the concert stage and it adds appreciably to the effectiveness of the show with its feeling for urban sensuality and jazz movement.

Stage regulations prevent children dancing in the theatre, and so in the numbers where the slum children dance, such as "Catch Me If You Can", Miss Sokolow mixed her dancers in with the youngsters. She had to control the natural movements of the children and to keep her trained dancers in line with the movements of the group. The electric jive dance with Sheila Bond and Danny Daniels, "Moon Faced and Starry Eyed", has a jitterbug basis, but arises out of valid characterization and grows into a wild sensuous thing. It is precisely the sort of dance a couple of neighborhood kids might do in the street on a hot night after a few drinks, and it stops the show regularly with its uninhibited excitement.

Miss Sokolow's choreography in the past has reflected her preoccupation with expressing the mood and tempo of the big city. *Case*

Bob Golby

Below: Anna Sokolow, known for her modern dance choreography, staged a sensuous jitterbug number and a children's sequence, below left, for the musical version of "Street Scene".

History in 1940 was a dramatic dance about juvenile delinquents. *Mama Beautiful* in 1942 was about a kid from the East Side who has never seen a butterfly. Like Kidd, Miss Sokolow believes that dancing should be integrated with the book of a show and should arise out of the action of the play. And like Kidd, she staged not only the dance numbers, but also the song sequences, thereby being able to make gradual transitions between the drama and the dancing.

Miss Sokolow is of the opinion that the Broadway musical can never hope to rival the concert stage in creativeness. She thinks that the modern dance, in undiluted concert form, could capture a Broadway audience if presented by an enterprising impresario. Of both concert and musical comedy dancing, Miss Sokolow demands that the audience derive an emotional response from it. "I like to dance about people," she says, "how they feel, what happens to them." That is an admirable standard, on or off Broadway.

Valerie Bettis had a difficult assignment in *Beggar's Holiday* because of the production vicissitudes the show experienced before reaching Broadway. Although she is listed as dance director, her responsibility for the show went much further than that, for she staged the opening and closing of all musical numbers in order to integrate the song-and-dance sequences with the dramatic line. Miss Bettis believes that the staging of a musical comedy ultimately evolves into a choreographer's problem. In *Beggar's Holiday*, the dancers in the show were given lines to speak in the interest of dramatic cohesion. Miss Bettis also handled all general group movements in the musical.

Miss Bettis contends that unless the choreographer is given commensurate authority and responsibility in a musical such as Agnes de Mille has in *Brigadoon*, many of his or her efforts are fruitless. In addition to her Broadway musical comedy work this season, Miss Bettis is currently represented with a ballet, *Virginia Sampler*, in the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo repertoire. She believes that modern dance, which has been her specialty to date, and ballet have much to contribute to each other. Miss Bettis prefers to keep her modern work as a dancer-choreographer intact in concert form, but she would also like to choreograph for a big company as she did for the Ballet Russe. In the musical comedy realm, she finds a lack of integration between the book and dancing of a show. "The dance never belongs — you have to make it belong," she says. "Very few writers know how to write for dance. Musical comedy is a great medium in terms of audience appeal. That is what ballet and modern need too — a general audience."

Vandamm

Below: Modern dancer Valerie Bettis did the dances for "Beggar's Holiday", based on the famous "Beggar's Opera". Below right: One sequence, featuring Paul Godkin, Marjorie Belle.

REHEARSING WITH THE Rockettes

Russell Markert trains Radio City's famous chorus for a new number

THE precision footwork of the Rockettes and the widespread fame of Radio City Music Hall's stage shows are closely linked. During a single year, the chorus line of the world's largest indoor theatre is seen and applauded by more than six million people. Under the direction of Russell Markert, the troupe is trained and rehearsed for new productions, but the uniformity and exactness of the stepping never varies. The Rockettes range in height from five feet three at the ends of the line to five feet six in the middle, which gives the audience an optical illusion that they are all the same size. Although only thirty-six girls appear on the stage at one time, actually there are forty-six Rockettes, ten dancers alternately taking a week's vacation. Markert has directed precision dancing since 1925, and has been creating routines for the Rockettes since the Music Hall opened in 1932.

Photos: Cosmo-Sileo

Above left: Markert starts to develop a new routine as soon as the music is set. Center left: Under the critical eye of Markert and their captain, the Rockettes learn the dance. Below, left: Costumes are an important ingredient of the lavish shows.

Opposite page, above: The girls have final rehearsals prior to the premiere of the new show. Opposite page, below: The finished dance is launched on world's largest stage.

Dancing Lansino

Famous member of famous family, Rita Hayworth on set of "Down to Earth".

by PHILIP K. SCHEUER

Rita Hayworth plays a glamorous goddess on leave from Olympia in her latest picture

AFICIONADOS of luscious Rita Hayworth may be interested to learn that Rita herself is an aficionada in the legitimate sense or as legitimate as a passion for the gore and excitement of the bullfight can ever seem to a North American. It's her Spanish blood.

Like Esther Williams, another unlikely toreador, Miss Hayworth has recently been taking lessons in the art of the sword and cape. An expert named Fernando Lopez has been coming up from Mexico City to Hollywood expressly to instruct her. While she and her husband Orson Welles, in whom a taste for strong red meat is less cause for eyebrow-raising, were in Mexico shooting *The Lady from Shanghai* last year, it was their invariable custom to fly each Sunday from Acapulco to the capital in order to toss their hats, and whatever other objects were handy, into the ring.

Miss Hayworth can offer no practical excuse

for her preoccupation with the sport. It is unrelated to her erstwhile siren role in *Blood and Sand*, and she certainly doesn't anticipate embracing it as a profession. "People either love it or they hate it," she explains, and, falling back on a woman's prerogative, "I love it." Just put the blame on Mame, boys.

The training, of course, hasn't hurt her as a dancer. Rita expects to go right on dancing in the cinema, although she would prefere to limit her appearance in musicals to one every eighteen months or two years. Her latest is *Down to Earth*, dance-staged by Jack Cole, in which she personifies Terpsichore taking a sabbatical from Olympus to terra firma in order to bring a little Greek decorum to Broadway.

"That is one musical on a different level from the ordinary," she says, "one that gave me a chance to do everything from ballet to boogie-woogie."

In *Gilda*, her preceding vehicle, Rita did a little dancing, but mostly as a teaser for Glenn Ford, her leading man, to say nothing of the lads out front. Gilda was, of course, one of those fatal femmes who are currently crowding respectable biddies off the screen, but the role was only a warm-up for the one she bites off in *Lady from Shanghai*.

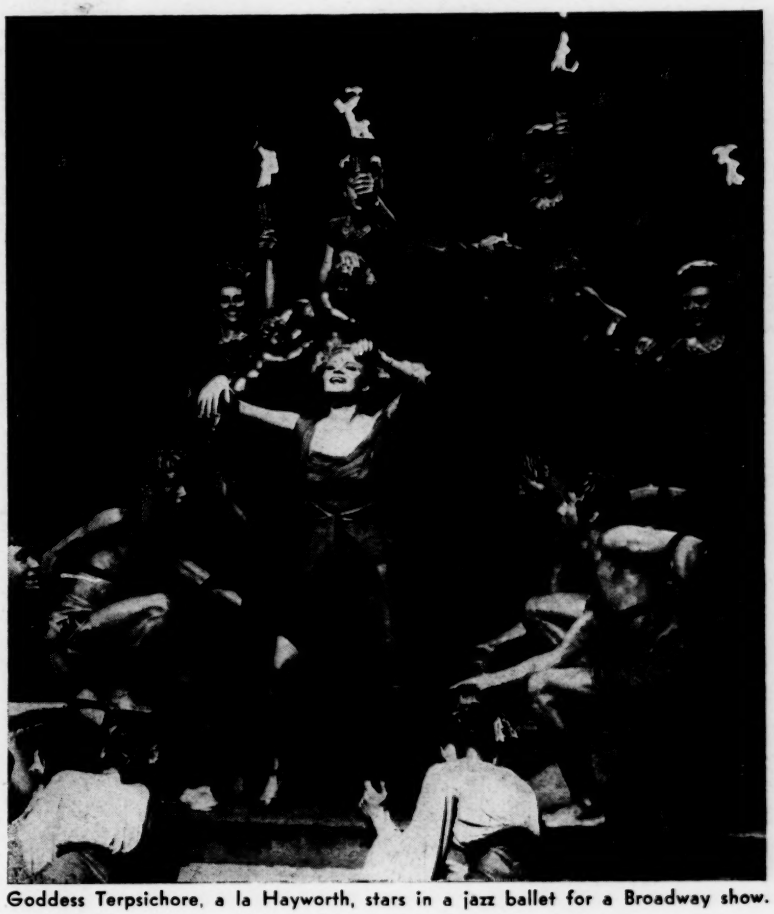
As Elsa Bannister, Rita is cast as the wife of an old misanthrope who, apparently with reason, suspects her of infidelity. His main purpose in arranging a yachting cruise to southern waters is, in fact, to catch the lady in a compromising position. As it turns out, Orson himself, playing an open-hearted but not-too-bright Irish sailor boy, is the patsy. Says he, speaking impersonally as writer-director-producer, "They're all dreadful people." All, at any rate, except the sailor boy.

Glenn Anders, an infrequent exursionist from Manhattan, is also in the company, which traveled to San Francisco as well as Mexico in pursuit of authentic locations. Production wound up back in Hollywood, but wonderman Welles was so sold on natural backgrounds by then that he announced he intends to make a regular thing of getting out and filming life in its native haunts, even if he has to do it with a sixteen-millimeter camera. Presumably he will sometime again be accompanied by his wife and leading lady, now that the rift between them has been patched up.

"Working in a straight story is so simple compared with a musical," Rita declared, "that I dread the thought of ever having to do another. Counting rehearsal time, we spent nine months on *Down to Earth*." She added that director Welles often addressed her as "mama" and, although he was "strict" with her, "stricter, really, than with the other players because I am his wife," she wouldn't have traded the experience for anything.

While the troupe was shooting at Acapulco, incidentally, Rita made an unscheduled good-neighbor gesture. For a Mexican firm, Norman Foster, an old friend, was directing a comedy in which a sailor wanders along the beach seeking a lost mermaid. Instead, he encounters Miss Hayworth sunning herself on a rock. "Looking for me?" she asks sweetly, in English.

Not having had a vacation from the cameras in two years, Rita was looking forward to one upon completion of *Lady from Shanghai*. For that picture she dyed her hair blonde, cutting it short and wearing it in an upswing with a part on the left, or in what the studio publicity boys are calling a "cinema swirl."



Goddess Terpsichore, a la Hayworth, stars in a jazz ballet for a Broadway show.

Her hair has been red in her last few movies, but there was a time when it was black, its natural color. That was when Rita was still Margarita Cansino, a plump, dark-eyed daughter of the famous Cansino clan. She didn't, as is commonly believed, dance with her father Eduardo in vaudeville, although she went along

with him on tours through the States and Canada at the tender ages of four, five and six. "I had an aunt to look after me," she relates, "but she couldn't keep the theatre from getting into my blood. I practically lived backstage, and show business was all I saw or heard." She did dance later with papa Eduardo in Tijuana and Agua Caliente; just below the California border. It was only a matter of time before she had crossed the line into Hollywood for keeps.

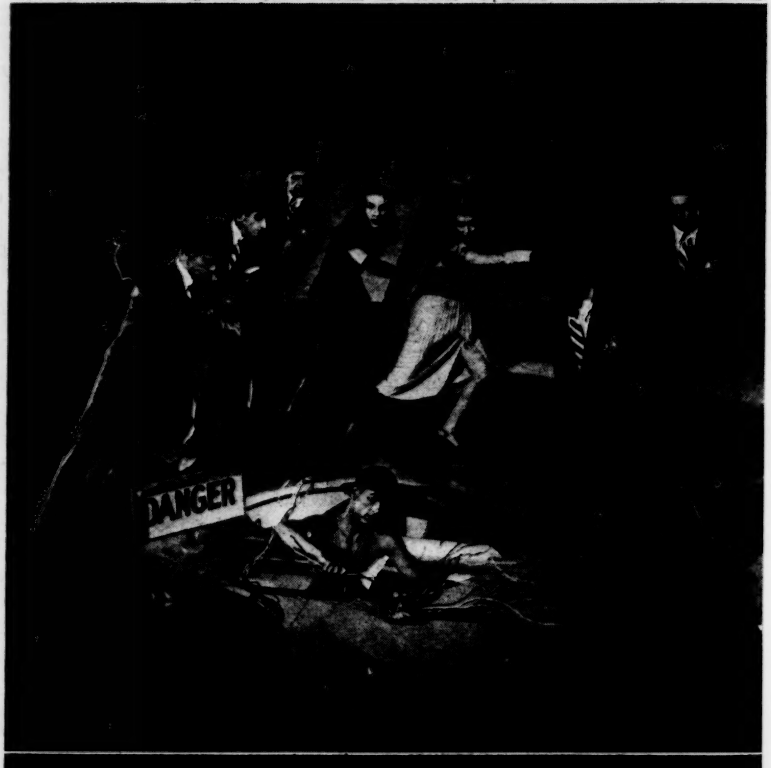
As Rita Cansino she was kept busy in minor parts at Fox, Columbia and in Westerns. No dancing. When Howard Hawks and Columbia got around to giving her her first big dramatic role, in *Only Angels Have Wings*, she had prepared for the break to the extent of changing her name to Hayworth, derived from an Irish-English mother. In *Angels* she played the wife of Richard Barthelmess, on the make for an old friend, Cary Grant, an augury of the Dona Sols, Gildas and Elsas to come.

"So you see, I was really an actress before I was a dancer, at least to the movie-going public," she exclaims. "When *My Gal Sal* and *Cover Girl* did come along I was glad to do them. I had lost the fear that, once I danced in a musical, I would be kept in them forever.

"Dancing is my natural heritage and I have always loved it. But I have also aways hated to practice. When I was younger I used to study ballet, Spanish and tap dancing for four and five hours a day, and it was no cinch, especially having a father who was so very strict. It was hard and tedious work and there were many times when I didn't think I could go on. But I did and, of course, as it turned out, the effort was worth it.

"Every girl who wants to dance should start training when she is young. I don't mean at four, as I did, but while she is still ambitious and able to 'take it.' Nor is dancing alone enough, today. If she really wants to succeed she must broaden her background to include drama, music, everything."

In Rita's case the "everything" probably encompassed radio, newspaper columning, politics and world affairs, but not every girl can afford a Welles as teacher.



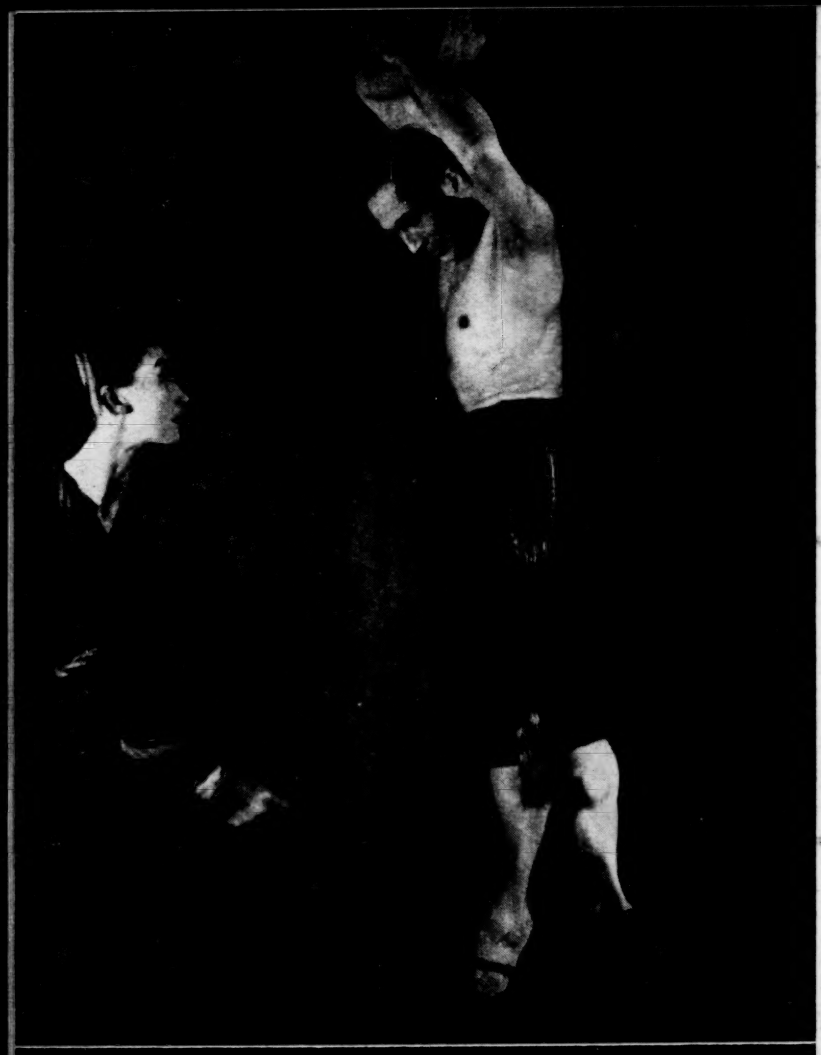
Above: As the Goddess of the dance, Rita Hayworth takes a fling at classic Greek ballet with Larry Parks and Marc Platt, but the box office demands jazz. Center: Miss Hayworth and ensemble in a modern New York dance sequence. Below: Hayworth and partner Platt essay serious ballet.

Lament FOR THE DEATH OF A Bullfighter

LAMENT FOR IGNACIO SANCHES MEJIAS, the Spanish title of Lorca's great elegy on the death of a bullfighter, is the basis for a powerful dance drama by Doris Humphrey, leading modern choreographer, for the outstanding modern dancer, Jose Limon. It was given its first performance on Broadway at the Belasco Theatre in January, and is now part of the repertoire of Limon's Company, of which Miss Humphrey is artistic director. *Lament for Ignacio Sanches Mejias* is probably the master work of Frederico Garcia Lorca, the foremost modern

Doris Humphrey choreographs Lorca's famous poem in a dance drama for Jose Limon

"Already the bull is bellowing in his forehead
at five in the afternoon . . .
The rest was death and death alone
at five in the afternoon.
(Quotations from the English translation by A. L. Lloyd, courtesy Oxford University Press.)



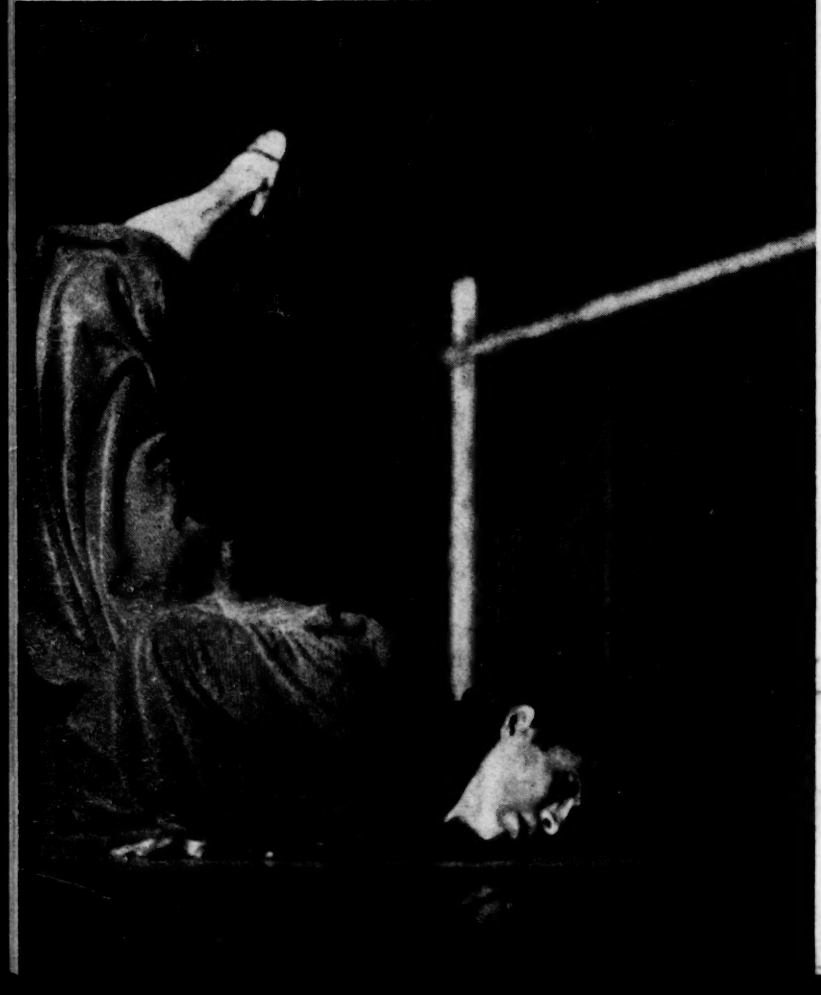
Left above: "Up the stairs went Ignacio with all his death upon his shoulders."

Left below: "His eyes did not close when he saw the horns near."

Spanish poet who was killed by the fascists in the Civil War. Miss Humphrey, Limon and composer Norman Lloyd have matched Lorca's impassioned poem with their choreographic contribution, resulting in a distinguished work which is easily the equal of any footlight effort of the past year.

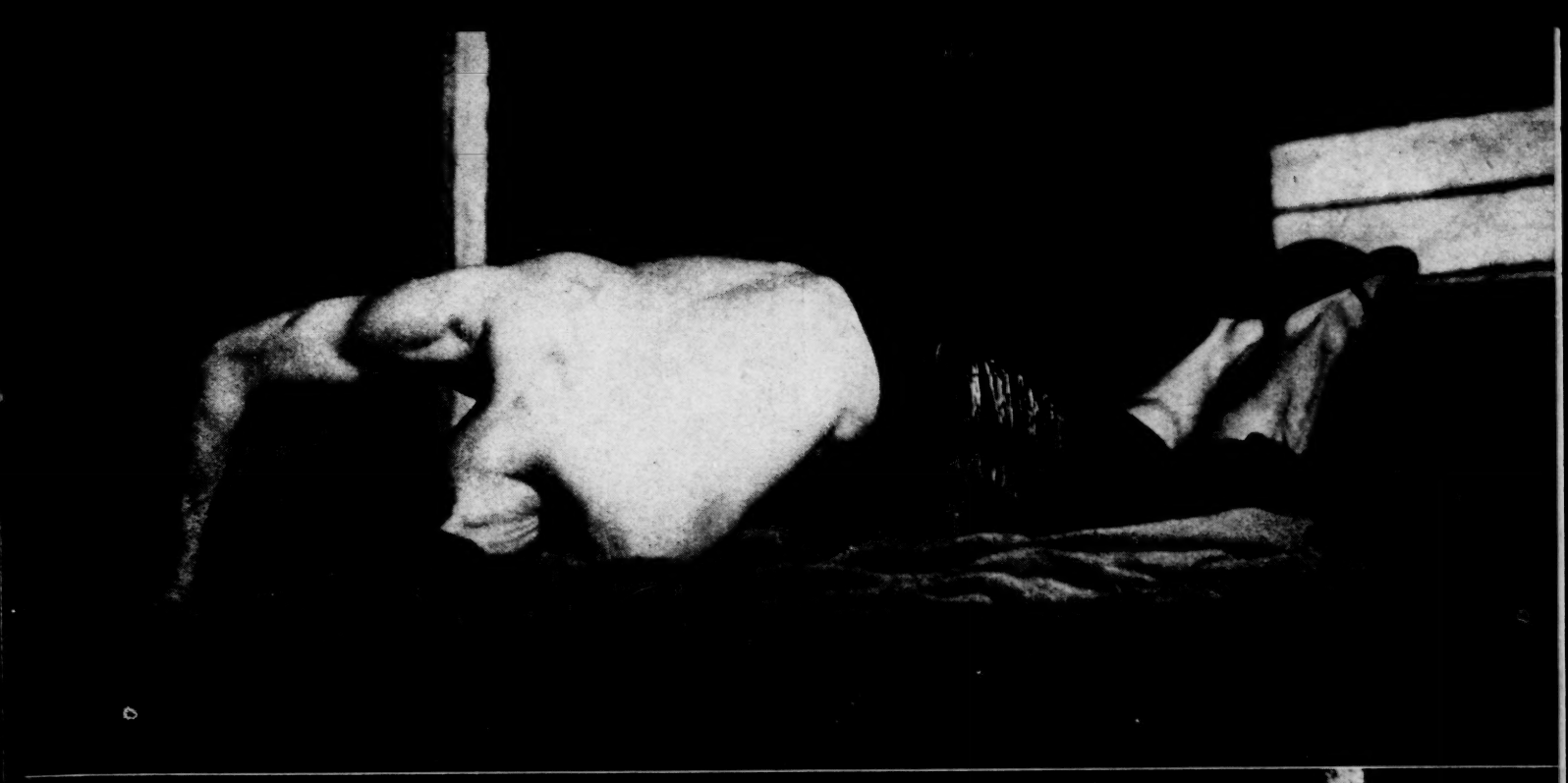
In translating *Lament for Ignacio Sanches Mejias* to the dance stage, Miss Humphrey did not use a literal approach. With an over-all conception of the poem, she drew neither upon the specific movements of bullfighting nor upon realistic representation. The figures of a Woman and of Destiny, portrayed by Meg Mundy and Letitia Ide respectively, speak Lorca's words and comment upon the action. The lines of the poem suggested certain movements to Miss Humphrey, and these were then executed and often elaborated upon by Limon. *Lament for Ignacio Sanches Mejias* is Miss Humphrey's first choreographic creation since *Inquest* in 1944, and it carries her work to an even higher level of accomplishment. E. G.

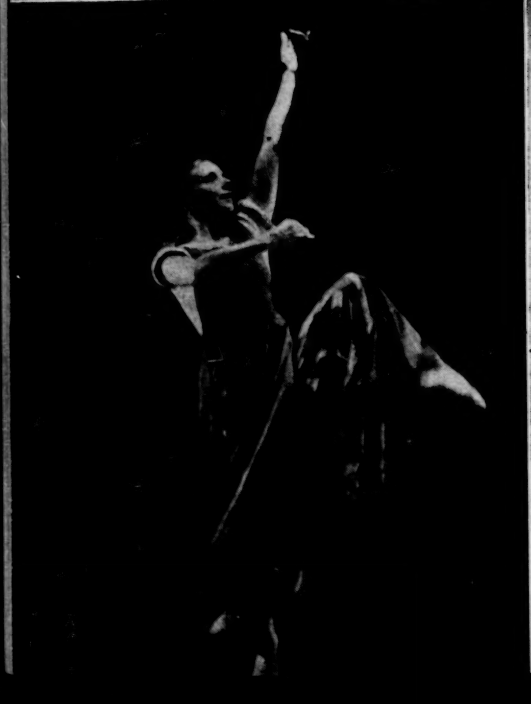
Photos: Carmen Schiavone



Right above: "There was no prince in Seville who could compare to him."

Right below: "He looked for daybreak but there was no daybreak."





offering a solution for the economic hardships which confront the modern dance profession

lo! the poor Dancer

by WALTER TERRY

FOR the final week of activities at the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival and School, the director announced that all students were free to attend (or skip) any classes they desired. The skipping occurred—directly into the ballet class, and other forms of dance were almost deserted. In the majority of cases, economics, rather than artistic leanings, was the deciding factor, for the students knew full well that mastery of ballet could lead to a job but that mastery of modern dance, for example, would lead no one knew where. Naturally, the technique of ballet had its ardent followers among the members of the student body, but modern dance and Hindu dance had their followers also. Several of the "moderns" who rushed to the ballet said, "We prefer modern dance, but we have to earn a living and dance jobs are ballet jobs."

True, the American Guild of Modern Artists requires that dancers in modern groups as well as in ballet companies be paid a weekly minimum wage of seventy-two dollars on the road, sixty-two dollars in New York, a thirty-five dollar minimum pay per week for the first five weeks of rehearsal and one-half pay thereafter for further rehearsal time; but if a modern dance tour is short, and they always are, the company member finds little in the way of year 'round security, and the head of a modern dance group has still greater expenses added to his already unbearable load. AGMA has helped the young dancer enormously, but has, of course, been able to do nothing for the economic problems of modern dance itself. A glance at the dance field bears out the opinion of young dancers that ballet is the technique which can be sold. There are potential jobs for the ballet dancer in those major ballet organizations which are active (and pay union salaries) for the greater part of the year and in the many Broadway shows which continue to feature ballet episodes. There are small ballet units which crop up from time to time and afford the young ballet

Critic suggests that leading modern dancers and choreographers combine in a single company which could plan extensive tours and would have greater audience appeal. Opposite page, left to right: Such a company might include Ted Shawn, Martha Graham, Charles Weidman, Helen Tamiris, Hanya Holm, Doris Humphrey, Barton Mumaw. Above: Merce Cunningham.

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Martha Graham, dancing "Appalachian Spring", heads a successful modern dance company.

dancer work, experience and pay for several months of the year.

But where can the modern dancer go? Even one who is exceptionally skilled? A reasonably good ballet dancer can usually get a dancing job, but a brilliant modern dancer is almost doomed before he begins. By teaching, he can make enough money to pay for a few performances each season, but he cannot afford a company (few solo dancers are successful), he cannot afford to stage his works as they should be done, he cannot afford an orchestra and he cannot afford promotion. As difficult as it is for him to act independently of dance organizations, what dance organization could he join if he desired? Martha Graham and Charles Weidman have dance companies, the only "name" professional modern dance groups in the country, but they cannot guarantee a year-'round job to the dancer, nor even a half-year job. The stars themselves are forced to teach in order to keep themselves going. A young modern with a particularly vivid personality or a knowledge of ballet can occasionally win a featured spot in a musical show, but the ballet dancer, because he represents an established, publicized and currently popular version of dance, has the inner track in the race for dance jobs.

It is obvious that something must be done about the economic hurdles of the

dance profession. Currently, the major ballet organizations are subsidized, but how long will "angels" put money into a venture which, apparently, cannot make money? I have been told that the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo struggled along for a few seasons without subsidy, but everything — size of company, number of stars, new productions, etc. — had to be reduced. Ballet, if it is to maintain the standards of artistic excellence and spectacular effects which audiences have come to expect from it, will probably never be able to pay its own way. As I have pointed out, modern dance has never made money away from the educational dance field. The Hindu dance exponent, even the Spanish dancer and others of the non-balletic schools may consider themselves without income unless they can swing or effectively distort their techniques in such a manner that they can serve, for a time, as night club novelties.

Talks with dancers, particularly with those not associated with ballet, disclose great differences of opinion with respect to what should be done to better the economic status of the dancer. Some would look for the inauguration of a national theater project, the establishment of government-endowed dance schools and theaters, while others point out that politicians would be the last persons in the country to govern the development of the dance art as it should be governed. Variations on this theme range from national supervision and endowment, to state or local subsidy. Still others believe that as dance education penetrates the schools of the country, a bigger dance audience will be created and that ultimately a national dance public will make it possible for dance groups to earn sufficient income through constant performances.

It is a disputable point whether the dance or any art should be viewed as a commercial commodity such as a

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yo-yo or an electric refrigerator, and hence must sell itself to a sometimes fickle public, or whether it should be regarded as a natural resource worthy of nurturing without monetary returns to the nurturer. There is something to be said for both views. But as long as dance has to support itself in one way or another, it seems to me that there are three preliminary jobs to be done: continue the fight to have dance taught in every school in the country; establish dance councils in every city for the purposes of urging public school dance education, of offering free lecture-demonstrations, of bringing the service of dance to as many community activities as possible; the banding together of several leading dancers into one company. The former jobs I have mentioned before in DANCE and they are concerned with the future. The third job, which relates to non-balletic dancers especially, can be put into effect immediately. It is an important one, although difficult, to accomplish. If modern dancers would emulate the organizational and production aspects of the big ballet company, I think they would achieve success. A company of modern dancers headed, perhaps, by Martha Graham, Charles Weidman, Valerie Bettis, Barton Mumaw, Peter Hamilton, Anna Sokolow and with a repertory of theatre works by them and by Doris Humphrey, Hanya Holm, Helen Tamiris, Ted Shawn, Merce Cunningham and others would certainly constitute a theatrical commodity of more interest to the public than a fragment thereof. I know full well that many of the above-named individuals would maintain that their approaches are different and that a single company could not dance the works of all. I submit, however, that Antony Tudor, Jerome Robbins, George Balanchine, Anton Dolin have all choreographed for the same company; certainly their styles are as distinct as those of Tamiris and Shawn. Such a union is possible, it is artistically sound and it is "bookable". Further, since modern dance does not require a symphony orchestra (a small ensemble will do) nor elaborate settings, such a union might not need the continued subsidy which ballet requires. Certainly, such a union is worth a try; no dancer could lose by it for little has been earned to be lost and the young modern dancer, with small hope at present, might find in it a faint beacon of promising light to guide him by.

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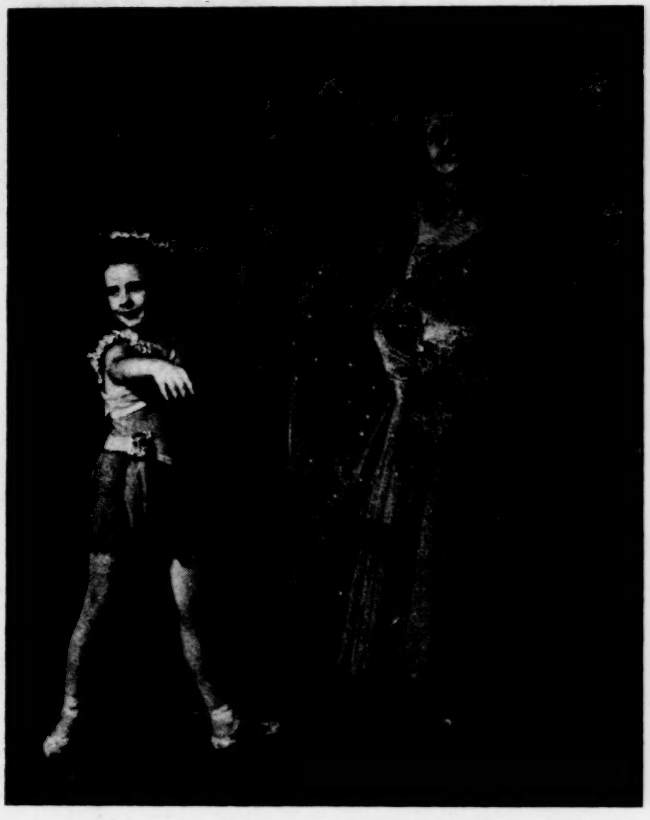

The screen's latest ballet story, MGM's "The Unfinished Dance", stars Margaret O'Brien and Cyd Charisse, who share honors in a spectacular ballet number, above. Below: Tardy ballerina Cyd Charisse is reprimanded by Gregory Gay for being late to rehearsal.

Dance Duos

Barry

Graphic House

DANCE teams have made successful contributions to Broadway musicals. Above: Estelle Sloan and Walter Long were featured dancer-singers in *Toplitzky of Notre Dame.* Center: Romantic duo in *Finian's Rainbow,* Anita Alvarez, as the mute girl, and David Wayne, as the leprechaun, currently display their talents in several comic dances devised by Michael Kidd. Below: Sheila Bond and Danny Daniels fling themselves into a sensational jitterbug number in *Street Scene.*

Vandamm

dance teams enliven the Broadway scene

DANCE DATELINES

PARIS

Roland Petit and the Ballet des Champs Elysees have created a new ballet, *The Washerwomen's Ball,* by Boris Kochno, with Vernon Duke music. The star dancer is nineteen-year-old Daniele Dormance. Formerly of the Bal Tabarin, she is a skating star as well as a classic and acrobatic dancer . . . The Opera-Comique is giving one evening a month to the ballet. J. J. Etcheverry's ballet version of *Le Barbier de Seville,* named *The Useless Precaution,* was danced by Lycette Darsonval, Etcheverry, Michel Gevel and Michel Payne . . . The Paris Opera has revived Jacques Ibert's ballet, *Diane de Poitiers,* which was originally danced by Ida Rubinstein . . . Numerous former stars of the Paris Opera have deserted that stage for the Opera of Monte Carlo where ballet, under Serge Lifar's direction, is a leading attraction. This winter they have presented *La Peri, Prelude a l'Apres-midi d'un Faune, Scheherazade,* and *Giselle* . . . Volinine, Pavlova's partner for eighteen years, is back in Paris after a trip to Copenhagen where he was invited to direct the ballet. Most of the corps de ballet of the Paris Opera can be seen at his school . . . Memorial services for Pavlova were held at the Russian Church in January on the anniversary of her death . . . Genevieve Mallarme, granddaughter of the great French poet, gave a recital in which she danced *The Swan Caught in the Ice,* taken from a poem by Mallarme, to a prelude by Bach . . . It is said that Leonid Lifar, brother of the dancer, has gone to Vienna to meet Vaslav and Romola Nijinsky. Nijinsky is to be brought back to Paris to head an international academy of the dance, which would be opened by a gala performance at which Lifar would dance.

HOLLYWOOD

Next starring assignment for Ann Miller at Columbia will be the title role in *The Petty Girl,* large-scale musical to be produced by Alfred Bloomingdale . . . Mary Treen, one of the featured supporting cast of *It's a Wonderful Life,* began her career as a dancer, studying with the Denishawn School and the Marion Morgan Dancers . . . The Old Vienna Ballet troupe, now on tour, has been signed by George Pal Productions to appear in animated Technicolor short subjects which will be released through Paramount . . . The Katherine Dunham School of Dance has suggested that a short film of Belita's ice skating sequences, from Monogram's *Suspense,* be made by the producers for dance education purposes . . . Novelty dance trio, Cliff, Artie and Lon Dunhill, have been signed for the Warner Brothers' Technicolor musical, *My Wild Irish Rose* . . . Dances for MGM's *Song of the Thin Man* are under the direction of Jack Donahue . . . Walter Lang has staged the dances for Betty Grable and Dan Daily in Twentieth Century-Fox's *Mother Wore Tights.*

NEW YORK

The revival of Victor Herbert's *Sweethearts* at the Shubert Theatre stars Bobby Clark, who carries the weight of the production on his shoulders and carries it off with his own inimitable style to everyone's satisfaction. The dance numbers, which find Mr. Clark shuffling as lighty as anyone, were choreographed by Theodore Adolphus . . . *Bloomer Girl,* with Agnes de Mille's dances, returned to New York with a short engagement at the City Center . . . Martha Graham and Company appeared at the Ziegfeld theatre for a limited run. The repertory of fourteen works included three new dance dramas, *Cave of the Heart* and *Errand Into the Maze,* by Miss Graham, and *Stephen Acrobat,* by Erick Hawkins . . . The Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo opened a six-week season at the New York City Center on February sixteenth. Valerie Bettis' new ballet, *Virginia Sampler,* a tableau of past American life, was given its premiere. The score for this work was specially composed by Leo Smit. Fostering the Americanization of the ballet, the company presented a program devoted to American choreographers in which Todd Bolender's *Comedia Bal-*

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letica, Ruth Page's *Frankie and Johnny*, Agnes de Mille's *Rodeo* and the Valerie Bettis ballet were danced . . . George Balanchine has done the choreography for *The Chocolate Soldier*, a revised version of the Oscar Straus operetta.

Two additions have recently been made to the dance library with the publication of books by John Martin,

Vandamm

Janice Cioffi offers a ballet divertissement in "Sweethearts", which stars Bobby Clark.

dance critic of the *New York Times*, and George Amberg, curator of the Museum of Modern Art's department of theatre arts. *The Dance* by Martin (Tudor Publishing Company, New York, $3.75, 160pp.) is a comprehensive history of dance from its primitive beginnings to the contemporary scene of ballet, modern and the potentialities of televised dance programs. The text includes comment on such figures as Fokine, Pavlova, Nijinsky, Balanchine, Massine, Duncan, Wigman, Shawn, St. Denis, Graham, Robbins, Tudor, de Mille, Weidman, Humphrey, Limon, Primus and Bettis. The pictures, which are rather inconveniently credited in an index at the back of the book, represent the work of such outstanding photographers as Mili, Valente, Eagle, Blechman, Morgan, Bouchard, Fehl and Peterich. Amberg's *Art and Modern Ballet* (Pantheon Press, New York, $15, 115pp., 202 plates)) is comprised of a rather turgid introduction, emphasizing the number of famous artists of our time who have designed sets for the ballet, and of ample illustration of the work of Picasso, Dali, Chagall, Matisse, Orozco, Berman and others. The only not-

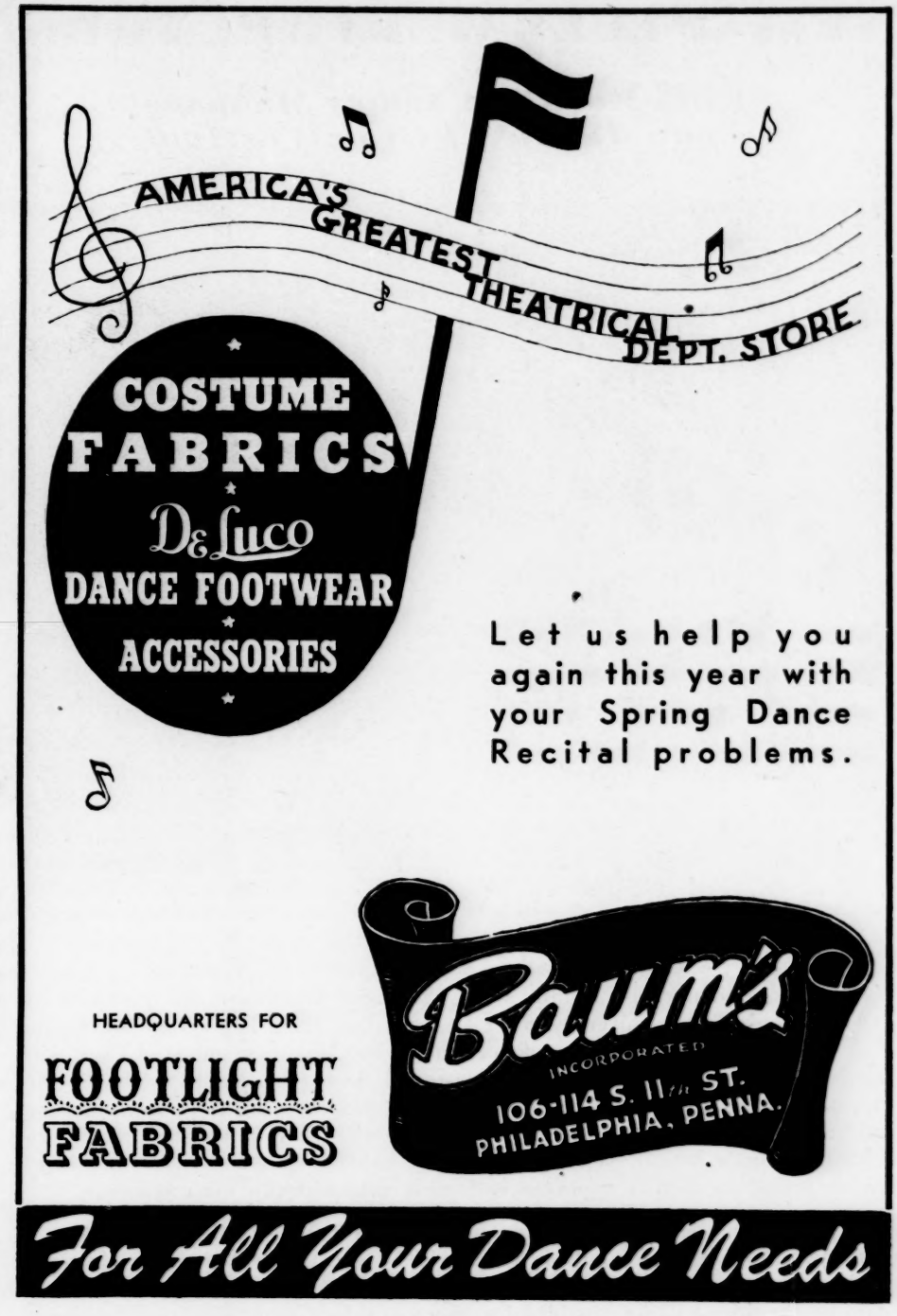
able omissions are the designs of Cecil Beaton.

Moira Shearer of the Sadler's Wells Ballet has been given a leading role in the forthcoming J. Arthur Rank Technicolor production, *Red Shoes*. Based on the Hans Christian Anderson fairy tale, the film will also feature the Sadler's Wells Ballet, under the direction of Robert Helpmann . . . Lee Sherman, who has assisted Gae Foster at the Roxy, will direct the dances for the *Fourth Little Show* . . . Pearl Primus was presented with the Newspaper Guild's "Page One Award" for her interpretation of Negro culture through the dance . . Katherine Dunham and Company appeared at La Martinique for a two-week engagement during February . . . . Judy Dupuy, editor of *The Televisor*, directed a dance drama titled *Shin-Dig for Two* for the Television Workshop.

CHICAGO

Merriel Abbott has produced her last show for the Palmer House's Empire Room. She has staged the shows there, featuring the Abbott dancers, for many years. The new policy for the hotel room has not been announced... Richard Barstow, who assisted with the productions at the Empire Room, has done the dances for the musical, *Barefoot Boy with Cheek* . . . Spanish dancer Velma Montoya has been featured in the show at the Bismarck Hotel . . . Sonja Henie's

1947 edition of Hollywood Ice Revue, staged by Catherine Littlefield, was the usual sellout at the Chicago Stadium . . . The Copacabana, new night club, has opened with a show staged by Wally Wanger. Dance acts include the Cerney Twins and soloist Marianne . . . Modern dancer Sybil Shearer gave her annual recital in Mandel Hall at the University of Chicago . . . *The Soda Bar*, an original ballet about bobby-soxers, was presented at television studio WBKD. It was choreographed by Marya Menzeli, who also danced the lead.



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NEW PILLOW DIRECTORS

Thalia Mara and Arthur Mahoney to run Jacob's Pillow Festival

Isolde Chapin

Thalia Mara and Arthur Mahoney will replace Ted Shawn as directors of summer dance university.

ARTHUR Mahoney and Thalia Mara have been appointed new directors of Jacob's Pillow University of the Dance at Lee, Mass. Replacing Ted Shawn, who founded the summer dance school, Mr. Mahoney and Miss Mara will retain many of the features of the educational dance curriculum established in previous seasons, but plan to expand the festival programs and to improve housing and recreational facilities. The new directors, who have established their own School of Dance Arts in New York, are thoroughly acquainted with the Pillow, having served as faculty members and guest artists during past seasons.

The most ambitious innovation of the new directors will be the formation of a permanent resident dance company which will be titled Ballet Repertory. Members of the company will be selected through competitions among Pillow students, and opportunities will be provided for choreographers, composers and designers. Planned for the opening of the season is an all-American program which will include a new ballet choreographed by Mr. Mahoney, with a score by Earl Wild and costumes and decor by Alfred Stern.

Jacob's Pillow, originally purchased by Ted Shawn in 1930 and the home of his troupe of male dancers, was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1941 and supplied with a theatre designed especially for the presentation of dance programs. Student enrollment has increased during the past five years and additional courses have been offered. Next season, there will be instruction in ballet, contemporary modern dance, character, Spanish, Hindu and Oriental dance. The curriculum will also include a lecture series covering the entire history of the dance and its relation to the other arts. The associated School of Opera and Opera Ballet under the direction of Rosamond Chapin will open its second season. All operas will be sung in English and there will be special emphasis on the integration of dance into operatic productions.

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Johnny on the Spot

by **PHILIP K. SCHEUER**

ALTHOUGH Johnny Coy looks as tough as a Dead End Kid, he can't shake off what he calls a Bostonian accent. In *On Stage Everybody,* a picture he danced and acted in, one of his lines was, "I've been there." Johnny pronounced it as written. "I've *bin* there," they corrected him. Twenty-two takes later he was still saying *been.* On the twenty-third, he got it.

Actually he was born and raised in Montreal, but the twang is much the same. Both Johnny's parents were Scotch and his real name is Ogilvie. At the age of nine his mother took in a countrywoman who was "fresh off the boat." From her he learned the Highland fling, with the kitchen linoleum as a dance floor. At the age of thirteen, his technique having improved willy-nilly, Johnny set out for New York to enter a Highland fling competition. He won the championship of Canada and the United States, an achievement undimmed by the fact he had simultaneously to blow his own bagpipe accompaniment.

Johnny's decision to be a dancer was thus, of course, cinched. But it's a long time between kiltie flings and, besides, there's no living in them. Johnny shifted his attack to tap ballet. By periodically renewing his visa he managed to pick up the know-how in Manhattan, at the Ernest Carlos' school, dutifully mailing his report cards home so his mother would see how he was progressing. After eight months he figured he was all set.

He was, for a while. He landed his first professional job with funnyman Joe E. Lewis at the Frolics. When the Frolics closed, he went on the road for thirty-five dollars a week, later rejoining Lewis at the Paradise Restaurant. Afterward he toured with Phil Spitalny and his all-girl orchestra, enjoying what many would consider the enviable distinction of being the only male in the troupe besides Spitalny. There is no answering gleam in his eye as he tells it, though, and he is equally lack-luster about a similar jaunt in the co-ed entourage of Ted Lewis.

His first Broadway show was *Keep Off the Grass*, with Jimmy Durante and Jane Froman. I'm in, he thought, but no breaks followed. So, fed up, as he says, Johnny got into the war effort early, making precision tools for England in 1940. He joined the Canadian army as an engineer, but was soon retired because of a physical disability. So he returned to hoofing, playing around Montreal clubs, until Monte Proser, the nightclub mogul, hired him to replace the Berry Brothers in a Copacabana revue on the road.

After that Johnny made the "Copa" in New York, again with Joe E. Lewis. He was drawing $125 a week then. Today, less than four years later, Johnny is asking $2500 to open at Proser's "Copa" in Hollywood.

Proser, Mary Martin and Buddy DeSylva. Johnny says he's grateful to all three. Miss Martin saw him in *Dancing in the Streets* at its Boston tryout and wired DeSylva, then production head of Paramount, that he was just the boy for the jockey in *Salty O'Rourke*. DeSylva met Johnny at Twenty-One, signed him "right there."

"When I got there no one wanted me," he relates. "I sat for six months, doing nothing, till Mr. DeSylva insisted they give me something to do in *Bring on the Girls*. It's still the biggest, in fact, the only success I've had, unless you want to count *Duffy's Tavern*.

"That's one reason I'm studying up on acting," Johnny explains. "You can't just be a dancer and get anywhere on the screen. I found that out when I tried to play parts as well as dance on loanouts to Universal and Republic in things like *That's the Spirit*, *On Stage Everybody* and *Earl Carroll Sketchbook*.

"The trouble is, I can't stop using my hands. When you dance you use your hands as well as your feet. As soon as my hands are tied, I feel that I'm walking around like a board. Can't break myself of that 'You're on, kid, go into

Photos above: Bud Fraker

Johnny Coy, whose latest screen credits include "Ladies Man" and "Variety Girl", reveals extraordinary elevation in these leaps.

Canadian Johnny Coy gave up the Highland fling for a fling at Broadway stage and Hollywood

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Johnny's big routine in *Ladies' Man* was to be an impromptu affair in a hotel lobby, a bellhop delivering a telegram. That's all they told him, and the day before shooting he still didn't have the routine. The only props he had to work with were four couches, a reception desk and a table. Johnny pleaded for special bouncy springs in the couches and finally got them. He bounced all over the furniture and for his "twist" ended up by practically scaling one of the walls.

Johnny blames the movies' Terp troubles on too many cooks.

"When it's time for the numbers, the dance director ought to have full say over everything, including camera angles. It's when they all go into a huddle and start arguing that the number is ruined. It's safe to bet there's not a dance director in the business who is satisfied with what comes out in the finished picture.

"What's more, a dancer should have the privilege of going into the cutting room and picking out his best takes. Low shots, for example, make leaps look higher. Regular cutters," he snorted, "have a positive knack for picking out the wrong ones."

In a poll of 1500 professional instructors headed by Arthur Murray, Johnny Coy was voted the outstanding screen dancer of 1945. His partner in *Sketchbook* was his wife, diminutive Dorothy Babbs, who stands ten inches shorter than his five-feet-nine. While she awaits their first child, Johnny will fill in with *Variety Girl*. He is twenty-seven now, with brown hair, blue eyes and a manner that is "coy" only in the sense that he shrinks from easy familiarity with people. What has sometimes been taken for truculence, even belligerence, on the screen is a reflection of this self-consciousness.

Johnny's kilted past has caught up with him just once in Hollywood. His studio, shooting a short called *Highland Lassie*, had reached an impasse in devising routines to go with the skirl of the pipes, so Johnny volunteered to supply them. Afterward he was offered due screen credit, but shrugged it aside. "I did it just for the kick," he says.

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DANCING WITH THE STARS

Above: The carnival scenes provide some of the lighter moments in MGM's "A Woman of My Own", which stars Greer Garson, who dances with newcomer Richard Hart. Below: Mickey Rooney and Gloria De Haven imagine themselves a Persian prince and princess in a colorful sequence from "Summer Holiday".

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DRESSING ROOM INTERVIEW

Peter Hamilton discusses need for synthesis of drama and the dance

Marcus Blechman
Peter Hamilton, featured dancer of the Weidman group, believes in combining drama and the dance.

PETER HAMILTON, featured dancer of the Charles Weidman group, made his solo bow in a concert at the Studio Theatre last fall. His dancing and his choreography, which ranged from violent athletics in a number like *Jesse James* to shuffling steps in *Hollow Men*, were received enthusiastically by both critics and audience, and marked him as a versatile artist with a future.

Hamilton, who was born in Trenton, New Jersey, is the only artist in a family which has never wholly accepted the idea of his being a dancer. He was a school teacher when he spent a summer at the Perry-Mansfield Camp and discovered that his agility in sports like swimming and tennis could easily be turned toward the dance. Since that time, he has studied with Charles Weidman, Doris Humphrey and Jose Limon, and today teaches at the Weidman studio. He has danced in three shows, *Jackpot*, which failed on the road; a production of *New Moon* at the City Center; and *Sing Out Sweet Land*, and has appeared at the Roxy. His night club experience included engagements at the Versailles and the Rainbow Room.

"The trouble with most dancers," stated Hamilton after his recent concert,

"is that they don't do anything except dance. They use their feet, but seldom their heads. They depend on technique, rather than getting an emotional or dramatic value out of movement.

"In doing T. S. Eliot's *Hollow Men*, for example, I tried to create the mood of the poem by discarding all ballet and modern training and using only those movements or lack of movement which seemed appropriate. By shuffling up and down a couple of stairs, I wanted to give the idea of monotony and endlessness that Eliot has transmitted with words. Out of the entire poem, I selected only certain lines to speak, lines which weren't too complex and could most easily be integrated with the dance.

"I think it is important to combine acting and dancing for both artistic and financial reasons. The use of words in a dance can heighten the drama of

the entire piece. Also, dancing alone isn't enough for a good job on the stage. A dancer, if he's lucky, gets about five minutes in a show, but no money and no billing. My ambition is to be an actor-dancer. I am convinced that a synthesis of both arts has most to offer the performer — and the audience."

ISOLDE CHAPIN.

Who's Who

PHILIP K. SCHEUER, film critic of the *Los Angeles Times*, has written for *Colliers* and other national magazines.

CARMEN SCHIAVONE, who has done photography for leading fashion magazines, is at present working on a book of camera studies of the Katherine Dunham troupe.

BERNARD SOBEL, an authority on the theatre, has contributed to *Theatre Arts* and *The Saturday Review of Literature*, and has published several books.

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FOOTNOTES

a paragraph or two on dance and democracy

There is a notable (?) omission in this issue — namely the absence of a review or other comment upon the recent programs of Ballet Society, the new Lincoln Kirstein-George Balanchine group dedicated to the use of "advance-guard ideas, methods and materials." The press was not invited to view the Ballet Society production because, according to Mr. Kirstein, Ballet Society can not afford to give away seats to reviewers. The recent Ballet Society productions were put on at the Central High School of Needle Trades and at the Hunter College Playhouse, both sizeable auditoriums, and the denial of press courtesies seems all the more peculiar in view of the fact that there are only four full-fledged dance reviewers on daily newspapers, with perhaps half a dozen others on periodicals.

However, the point of this piece is not so much to protest the denial of press coverage for several Ballet Society presentations as to point out the dangers implicit in such a stand. Apparently Ballet Society and a good many other dance groups and individuals subscribe to the belief that dancing flourishes best in a hothouse atmosphere. Ballet Society is based on a limited subscription following, and no less a critic than John Martin is of the opinion that this kind of "high-minded subsidy" will serve ballet best in view of the "demonstrated failure of other methods," by which he means any form of general popular presentation.

Ballet, of course, was once an entertainment for the aristocrats, and perhaps Mr. Kirstein and his cohorts would like to see the dance art revert to its one-time status. This corner, however, prefers to string along with the rabble. In view of the fact that democracy manages to muddle along both in peace and in war, it is quite probable that it is a pretty good bet in art as well. Some of the greatest figures in the realm of the arts from Homer to Lorca, and from Pavlova to Fred Astaire serve to prove that merit and popular appeal are not incompatible. Isolation is healthy neither for the individual nor for an art. The trouble with too much dancing today is that it is nurtured within limited confines that do not pay off artistically or commercially.

Mr. Kirstein does not want the press to cover Ballet Society not because he can not afford to give away a handful of seats, but because he wants to keep Ballet Society an hermetically sealed operation. By the same token, Mr. Kirstein does not desire the presence of the public either. The public might obtrude a good many untidy and distasteful problems upon an art that is thoroughly satisfactory to its practitioners and their immediate circle of friends. If Mr. Kirstein were an isolated example of this point of view, these paragraphs would be beside the point. Unfortunately, he represents a rather prevalent approach toward the dance.

Rita Hayworth, take it away! **E. G.**

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